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U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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## Grand Canyon News Release

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### **Grand Canyon fire officials plan two prescribed fires if conditions permit**

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** - Grand Canyon National Park fire officials are planning to conduct two prescribed fires on the North Rim, starting on October 25 if weather and forest conditions permit. The Walhalla unit is 1,028 acres and is located approximately four air miles east of the North Rim Developed area. Aerial ignition will be used and it is anticipated that the entire unit may burn in one day.

The Uncle Jim unit is 3,359 acres and is located approximately two air miles northeast of the North Rim developed area. Fire managers are anticipating that only 1,600 acres of the unit will actively burn due to recent fire activity in the immediate area. Aerial ignition will also be used and it is anticipated that this burn will occur on October 26.

If conditions allow and these units are ignited, the scenic road which leads to Point Imperial and Cape Royal will close effective October 25, for public safety and will remain closed until fire managers determine the road is safe for travel. Additionally, the old Bright Angel Trail and Ken Patrick Trail will also be closed for public safety – this closure will take affect on October 24.

Facilities on the North Rim closed for the season on October 16. The North Rim remains open for day use until snow closes Highway 67 (see Park's news release titled *Autumn colors signify that the end of another visitor season on the North Rim is near* – dated September 24, 2007 at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parknews/newsreleases.htm> for further information on the North Rim).

For both units smoke is projected to disperse to the northeast during the days of the burns. Heavy to moderate amounts of smoke will settle into the canyon at night and begin to lift out with daytime heating by late morning. Smoke settling into the canyon at night may occur two to four nights after ignition has been completed due to residual burning on the units. Smoke impacts will continually decrease as the days go by.

Prior to prescribed burning, Grand Canyon National Park fire managers will evaluate weather conditions and coordinate with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. If conditions do not meet predetermined standards for air quality, burns will be postponed until conditions are appropriate.

Fire managers use prescribed fire to restore and sustain the fire-dependant ecosystems that surround the Grand Canyon. Benefits from these fires include reducing hazardous fuels that can lead to more intense wildfires, sustaining ecological processes like nutrient and biomass recycling, balancing plant regeneration and mortality, and providing a diversity of habitats for native plants and animals. Prescribed fires are typically ignited in the spring and fall when surface vegetation and fuels are dry enough to burn with low intensities while the underlying soils remain moist from seasonal precipitation.

The Southwest Roost prescribed burn was completed on October 19. There continues to be moderate fire activity on the interior of the unit. Smoke during the day is visible from the south rim and is expected to be for several more days. Fire managers will continue to closely monitor the unit until it is declared out.

For further information, please contact Maureen Oltrogge, Public Affairs Officer at Grand Canyon National Park, at (928) 638-7779; call the park's recorded fire information message at (928) 638-7819; or visit the park's web site at [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca).

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